

Mr. Speaker, any time that we begin to take freedom for granted, I would like my colleagues here in this House to think of Fuming Fong and what he went through and how beautiful this country of America is.

WASHINGTON WASTE WATCHERS

(Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I once again want to talk a little about the Washington Waste Watchers and the work that a number of us are trying to do to root out waste in Washington. The examples are just one after another; but one that hit me, I think like a ton of bricks, was the \$814,000 in salary and bonuses for a Head Start executive director in Kansas.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, when we bring these up, our good friends on the Democratic side of the aisle have only one solution. What is their solution? Do they join us when the chairman of the Committee on the Budget proposes to cut 1 percent in waste, fraud, and abuse? No, they propose increased taxes on the American people.

When we see a \$470,000 grant to study individuals, now, listen to this, drinking alcohol while watching pornography, do we get the Members of the other side of the aisle coming forward to say we want to help cut waste, fraud, and abuse? No, they propose to increase taxes on the American people. When we see, for example, the Impact Aid funds intending to go to schools in South Dakota that were instead used, some of them, to purchase real estate, to purchase a Lincoln Navigator and a Cadillac Escalade, do we get our friends on the Democratic side of the aisle to say we want to support you in cutting this waste? No, they propose increasing taxes, 25 times just this year alone.

NO MONEY FOR EXTENDED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR AMERICANS

(Mr. DEFAZIO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DEFAZIO. Mr. Speaker, the whining from the other side of the aisle is extraordinary. They can see all this waste, fraud, and abuse; but they control the White House, the Senate, and the House and yet they do not do anything about it. Puzzling.

Here is something else they do nothing about which is very puzzling. There are 4 million American workers who have exhausted their unemployment benefits and cannot find work. The President and the Republican majority say that we cannot afford to extend unemployment benefits to these people, despite the fact there is \$20 billion sitting in the Unemployment Trust Fund of taxes paid by Americans.

No waste, fraud, and abuse here; there are just people who cannot find work and want it. Now, the Republicans say we cannot afford it, but they are borrowing hundreds of millions of dollars to pay Iraqis for no-show jobs. The anti-waste, -fraud, and -abuse crowd is happy to pay Iraqis for no-show jobs, but they will not give unemployed Americans benefits out of a trust fund. These are people who want to work and cannot find work because of the miserable economic record of this administration.

IRMO HIGH SCHOOL'S BLUE RIBBON AWARD FOR 2003

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the students and faculty of Irmo High School in Irmo, South, Carolina. Irmo High just received recognition from the U.S. Department of Education as a blue ribbon school, their third such award.

As Secretary of Education Rod Paige has said, schools chosen for the blue ribbon will be ones that are meeting our mission to ensure that every child learns and no child is left behind. Blue ribbon recipients will be national models of excellence that others can learn from.

I want to personally thank the hard work of the faculty who have visited Washington, including Principal Gerald Witt, teachers Phil Tanner, Jan McCarthy, and JROTC director Colonel Pete Sercer. Also, School District Five school board members have supported the progress made at Irmo High School, especially Jan Hammond, Paula Hite, and Carol Sloop. Yet above all, the ones who really deserve recognition are the students who have achieved remarkably.

Irmo High School is truly an example of educational success, and I ask all my colleagues to join me in honoring the school today, a day highlighted by the visit of California Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger.

In conclusion, may God bless our troops.

THE ECONOMY

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, when I travel home to Los Angeles County, the people ask me, where are the jobs? Where are the extended unemployment insurance benefits?

When we look at this chart, we can see that since January of 2001 we have not made any progress. In fact, in the San Gabriel Valley the unemployment rate is still above 10 percent, and it is double digit in areas that are unincorporated in East Los Angeles where we have high minority populations. These

are working people that are looking for relief. They are waiting for unemployment insurance. And they are also asking why is the Republican Party not doing more to strengthen our economy.

The Democrats want to provide pay increases for our Reservists and our military families. I am ashamed to say these are the same families we represent that are in waiting lines to get food, these Reservist families in my district; and I think that is abominable.

We need to provide a tax incentive to encourage companies to keep jobs at home, not abroad, like Halliburton and Bechtel. We need to raise the minimum wage. We need to pass a highway infrastructure bill that will keep good-paying jobs, not minimum-wage jobs, but jobs that pay above minimum wage.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to consider proposing those incentives that we are talking about today to restore the economy for Americans.

NO FINANCIAL AID FOR SEX OFFENDERS ACT

(Mr. KELLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KELLER. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing the No Financial Aid for Sex Offenders Act for 2003. It is a national embarrassment that we are handing out taxpayer dollars for pedophiles and rapists to take college courses while hardworking young people from poor and middle class families are left to flip hamburgers and mow lawns to pay for college.

In 1972, Congress created the Pell grant program to help children from low- and moderate-income families go to college. In 1994, Congress prohibited State and Federal prisoners from getting these Pell grants. This past year, 54 violent sexual predators in Florida obtained over \$200,000 in Pell grants at taxpayer expense. They got a free ride by exploiting a loophole, that is, they were involuntarily confined in something called a civil commitment center as opposed to being called a prison.

This legislation closes that loophole and ensures that this money will be used as intended, by needy law-abiding college students. I urge my colleagues to cosponsor this legislation, H.R. 3385.

ARMED FORCES TAX FAIRNESS BILL

(Mr. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, it is outrageous, it is unbelievable, but it is true. The House Republican leadership has kept at the Speaker's desk, since March of this year, the Armed Forces Tax Fairness Bill. Several months ago, they said we could afford to give a \$230,000 tax break to American citizens living safely here at home making \$1